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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, January 7, 1929

Subject: "How to Fry." Approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

NOTE: The Christmas rush exhausted the supply of "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes." A reprint has been ordered, and the new supply will be ready in a few weeks.

--ooOoo--

"Cookery is become an art, a noble science," said a man who lived almost 300 years ago.

In the past 300 years, immense strides have been made in the art of cookery, and American women excel in all but one branch of this "noble science." We can roast, we can bake, and we can boil, but when it comes to frying, there is something to be desired.

With the help of the Recipe Lady, I have gathered together some special pointers on frying, which I shall pass on to you.

There are two kinds of frying--sautéing(pronounced saw-tay-ing), and deep-fat frying. Sautéing means "to cook in a shallow pan, in a small amount of hot fat." Eggs are sautéed.

Deep-fat frying means to immerse the food in a kettle of hot fat, deep enough to float it. Doughnuts are fried.

Certain foods such as eggs, hash, and liver, are always sautéed, or cooked in a small amount of fat; many other foods may be cooked by either method. Croquettes and fritters may be sautéed, if you like, but they may also be fried in deep fat. Foods fried in deep fat are less likely to be greasy than those fried in shallow fat, because when foods are immersed in the hot fat, the heat immediately forms a coating around them, through which the grease is not so likely to penetrate.

There are three important things to learn about deep-fat frying: (1) the kinds of fat to use; (2) the correct temperature of the fat; (3) the correct preparation of the food to be fried.

Let's consider the kinds of fat good for frying. Butter? No. Butter burns too quickly, and besides, it's too expensive. Olive oil? It may be used, but it also is expensive. Lard? Of course. Lard is one

of the most popular of the fats for deep-fat frying, along with the well-known cottonseed and other vegetable oils, and the solid white vegetable fats.

Use whichever fat you prefer, but remember to heat the fat slowly, and to test the temperature, and drop in the food, before the fat begins to smoke.

The second important thing for us to learn, about deep-fat frying, is the correct temperature of the fat used for frying. If you have a special frying thermometer you are an effecient cook. However, I've known a good many famous cooks who used these old-fashioned tests -- and got along very well.

When a cube of bread dropped into the hot fat turns light brown in 50 to 60 seconds, it is the proper temperature for frying uncooked mixtures, such as doughnuts and fritters. A thermometer should register between 340 and 360 degrees Fahrenheit.

As I said before, the old-fashioned tests are all right, but they are not so accurate as a thermometer, and not so convenient.

When the fat has almost reached the temperature you want, reduce the heat, if you don't the fat will reach the smoking stage before you know it; then drop in the food to be fried. This will cool the fat somewhat, but not enough to affect the frying, unless too much food is crowded into the kettle.

Another thing, in deep-fat frying, don't crowd -- fry only small quantities at a time. Crowding cools the fat too much, and spoils the appearance of the food which is being fried.

The third important point in deep-fat frying is the preparation of the food. Soft mixtures, like croquettes, are always dipped in eggs and crumbs. The Recipe Lady says she always dips the croquettes in the egg first, and then in the crumbs. The egg should be slightly beaten with a fork, and one tablespoon of water added for each egg used. The crumbs used for coating should be fine, with no brown crusts mixed in them. It is better for croquettes to stand an hour or so before being fried, so that a dry coating may form. The coating prevents the grease from being absorbed. And remember this, says the Recipe Lady, fry only a few croquettes at a time.

There are two questions to answer, in connection with frying, and then I'll tell you how the Recipe Lady cooks French Fried Potatoes.

First question: "How should fat be clarified, so that it can be used more than once?"

Fat may be clarified with slices of potatoes, as every experienced housekeeper knows, or with potato and apple, as it heats. To clarify with raw potato, melt the fat, and add slices of raw potatoes. Heat the fat gradually. When it ceases to bubble, and the potatoes are brown, strain the fat through cheesecloth, and cool.. Small quantities of fat may be clarified by pouring boiling water on cold fat, stirring well, and setting aside till a cake of fat forms on top of the water. Then the sediment is scraped from the bottom of the cake. If this fat is to be kept for several days, it should be reheated to drive off the water.

Second question: "What cooking utensils are needed for frying?"

The utensils needed for frying consist of a large, flat bottomed iron kettle, a long fork or spoon, and a wire basket, for convenience in removing food from the kettle. And of course, to drain the food after frying, you will want a rack covered with clean absorbent paper.

If you are sort of an artistic cook and go in for fancy shapes in French Fried Potatoes, you might add to your frying equipment a potato-chip slicer, Julienne knife, potato curler, and a lattice cutter. A lattice cutter was one of my practical Christmas gifts -- with it I can make fancy little potato shapes which look like tiny waffles.

Here's how the Recipe Lady makes crisp, delectable, French Fried Potatoes:

Peel the potatoes, and cut them lengthwise into strips about one-half inch thick. Rinse the strips in cold running water, and soak them for two or three hours, in cold water, to remove as much of the starch as possible. Dip them from the water, and pat them with a clean dry cloth, to absorb as much moisture as possible. Heat a kettle of deep fat, hot enough to brown a small piece of bread in sixty seconds. Fry about a cupful of potatoes at one time. In cooking potatoes, remember that the water in the potatoes reduces the temperature, before putting in more potatoes. When the potatoes are golden brown, remove them from the fat, drain on absorbent paper, and sprinkle with salt. Serve at once, while they're hot and crisp.

I didn't intend to give you a menu today, but I believe I will -- these French Fried Potatoes seem to need a good juicy beefsteak to go with them. And some Creamed Celery and Pickled Beets.. There -- that's a menu good enough for anybody: Beefsteak; French Fried Potatoes; Creamed Celery; Pickled Beets; and Bread and Butter. Shall we have a dessert? Then let's have one easy to prepare, for I'm making over a dress this afternoon, and haven't much time for fancy desserts.

Orange Russe, that's the thing. Slice some oranges and discard as much of the "rag" as possible. Then, take some of the Sponge Cake

left over from yesterday. What? No sponge cake left over from yesterday? Then send Tommy to the bakery, to buy a few lady fingers. When he gets back with all but two of the lady fingers, arrange small pieces of the lady fingers around the sides of individual glass dishes, or cups, and pile the oranges in the center. Then sprinkle with powdered sugar or grated cocoanut. Chill thoroughly before serving.

Now let's repeat our menu: Beefsteak; French Fried Potatoes; Creamed Celery; Pickled Beets; and Orange Russe.

Sometime this week I must give you a recipe for doughnuts. Perhaps the Menu Specialist has included doughnuts on one of this week's menus. I shouldn't be surprised if she has.

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Tomorrow: "Hints for the Home Dressmaker."

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